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Personal Statement of Academic Advising Philosophy

I was never sure of what I wanted to be when I grew up. As an undergraduate student, I explored different majors and potential careers but as I finished my final courses, I still wasn't entirely sure what my next steps would be. But I knew education was always important to me.

As a first generation, Latina student who was raising their younger sibling while in college, I felt that my strengths were being able to connect to many nontraditional students. As a student, I worked as a peer advisor for the Career Center, served as a TA for an inclusion and diversity course, and worked alongside our campus's basic needs efforts. I related to the many challenges students faced while completing their bachelor's degree and because of the support and mentorship I received from our staff and faculty, I learned how to successfully navigate and complete a degree in higher education. It wasn't until I graduated that I realized my passion was in working with students in higher education.

Welcoming: I first began working as an advisor during the pandemic and I wanted to find a way to be able to make my virtual office feel welcoming. I wanted my home office to be able to show part of who I am and the things I enjoy. When students join me for a virtual meeting, they'll see my cork board next to me with cards from family, friends and students. They'll see a quirky calendar hanging and every now and then they will find flowers in the background. I also like to have my small UCSC pennant flag attached to my cork board and I hope that at least this can allow them to not just see me as an advisor but also as a former fellow slug. Students will usually ask me what I studied and upon finding that I was in the major I now advise in, this tends to lead into conversations about courses I enjoyed as well as my career trajectory.

Student Centered: Our role as an advisor is to support each student through their college journey. My goal is to guide them through their undergraduate career, their growth, and their development by being an active listener and understanding that each student's needs are unique.

Empowering: As an advisor, it is my role to provide each student with the tools they need to be successful. This includes having meaningful conversations and asking open ended questions. When I was an undergraduate student and needed support from an advisor, I appreciated when an environment was created where the advisor and I were working together as a team towards a common goal - my success. As an advisor I want to create a similar environment where the student can feel that we are a team. It is my goal to support them through this journey by providing them with the tools, resources, as well as alternative options and solutions to succeed. I want to allow students to use our meetings as a way to think out loud, process their thoughts and make an informed decision on what they believe is best for them. My

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goal is to support the development of their critical thinking skills as well as their problem solving skills.

Caring: Completing an undergraduate career isn't easy, especially for nontraditional students. And scheduling to meet with an advisor for the first time can sometimes be nerve-wrecking, even more so if additional support is needed. Each student's cultural background and identity may have a different approach to navigating through the challenges a higher education brings but I want to acknowledge that scheduling our first meeting is a great accomplishment in itself. It's important as an advisor to listen to each student's needs empathetically and listen with the purpose to better understand those needs. By listening and engaging in these conversations I learn more about the student, their values, and their strengths and affirm their abilities in achieving their goals.

Inclusivity: As an advisor, it's important for me to create an inclusive environment, especially for our non-traditional students. I strive to do so by continually connecting with and learning from our university's resource centers, especially those that support marginalized communities. Through a developmental advising approach, my goal is to help incorporate their interests into their academics as well as help guide them towards future pathways. Our university prides itself on being a diverse community and it's important to welcome diversity while recognizing each student's uniqueness.

Strong Relationships: With a caseload of over 300 students, this can open the opportunity for 300 unique conversations to happen. While each interaction is different, I like to ask students how they're feeling with their courses and if there's a specific course they are really enjoying. One of the best practices that I use to learn is through taking hand-written notes. During my advising sessions I take notes on questions that are coming up as well as any other items the student shares with me as a way for me to remember each of my students. At the end of each meeting, I like to summarize with the student what we discussed and the steps the student and I will each need to make following this conversation. For meetings where I provided extensive information and where we discuss deadlines that need to be met, I will follow up with an email to have our meeting resummarized in writing as a way to help them and myself keep track of our to-do's.

Prior to each appointment, I like to take 5-10 minutes before each meeting to review email conversations we've had, whether they were a summary of our previous meeting or a separate question sent to me, read through my notes, and review their academic progress to identify what courses they have remaining. By doing so I am able to better reconnect with the student from where we left off and use our time more efficiently focusing on the new items the student is wanting us to discuss.

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Academic Integrity: Our major has specific requirements that need to be met and it is my responsibility to effectively communicate this with our students. It's important for me to know and understand our university's policies and procedures in order to provide students with accurate information.

Innovative: Every quarter I take a moment to reflect on what has been working for students and what areas students are seeking further support in. I review my notes and consider the questions I was asked most frequently and how my approaches were able to support the student. I look for ways to better communicate to our students new information as well as learn from my colleagues to develop better practices. Forms and policies are constantly changing and while I am here to support the growth and development of my students, it is equally important for me to also continue to grow and develop as a way to best support our students.